

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, MX

SUBJECT: USG APRIL 1975 STATEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION MEETING

FOR IWY CONFERENCE

BEGIN QUOTE

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO AFFIRM THAT THE FAMILY PLANNING  
PROGRAM IN PUERTO RICO SUPPORTS HUMAN RIGHTS AS SET OUT  
IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. MOREOVER,  
THIS PROGRAM IS IN DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RIGHT OF  
FREE ACCESS TO ALL METHODS OF BIRTH CONTROL WHICH WAS PRO-  
CLAIMED AND UNDERScoreD BY THE WORLD POPULATION PLAN OF  
ACTION, PARAGRAPH 14(F), WHICH WAS ADOPTED ON AUGUST 30,  
1974 BY CONSENSUS OF ALL THE PARTICIPATING NATIONS AT THE  
UNITED NATIONS WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE AT BUCHAREST,  
ROMANIA, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE HOLY SEE. THAT PARA-  
GRAPH OF THE PLAN OF ACTION READS: "ALL COUPLES AND  
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INDIVIDUALS HAVE THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHT TO DECIDE FREELY

AND RESPONSIBLY THE NUMBER AND SPACING OF THEIR CHILDREN  
AND TO HAVE THE INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND MEANS TO DO SO;  
THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COUPLES AND INDIVIDUALS IN THE  
EXERCISE OF THIS RIGHT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE NEEDS OF

THEIR LIVING AND FUTURE CHILDREN, AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD THE COMMUNITY."

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO, CONCERNED OVER THE DISASTROUS IMPLICATIONS OF UNRESTRAINED POPULATION GROWTH AND ITS NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON THE WELFARE OF THE INHABITANTS OF PUERTO RICO, HAS DEVELOPED A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM. THIS PROGRAM OFFERS, ON A COST-FREE BASIS AND IN A STRICTLY VOLUNTARY MANNER, ALL SCIENTIFICALLY APPROVED METHODS OF BIRTH CONTROL, INCLUDING MALE AND FEMALE STERILIZATIONS.

PATIENTS WHO REQUEST THIS LATTER SERVICE ARE INTERVIEWED BY A SOCIAL SERVICE WORKER WHO INFORMS THEM THOROUGHLY OF THE NATURE OF THE OPERATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS REGARDING FUTURE FERTILITY. IF PATIENTS STILL DESIRE IT, THEY THEN SIGN AN INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PERMISSION TO BE OPERATED UPON. THEY ARE THEN GIVEN AN ADDITIONAL THREE DAYS TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS IF THEY SO DESIRE. IT WAS FELT BY HEALTH OFFICIALS OF THE COMMONWEALTH THAT ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE OPERATION SIMPLY DENIED THE RIGHTS OF ACCESS TO SERVICES OF THE LOWER CLASSES AND DISCRIMINATED AGAINST THEM SINCE UPPER AND UPPER MIDDLE CLASSES COULD AFFORD TO PAY FOR THESE SERVICES FROM THEIR PRIVATE PHYSICIANS.

IT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD THAT STERILIZATION HAS BEEN A FAVORED METHOD OF BIRTH CONTROL OF THE PUERTO RICAN PATIENT, DATING BACK TO 1943. AS OF 1974, TWENTY-EIGHT PERCENT OF THE WOMEN OF CHILD-BEARING AGE HAVE UNDERGONE THIS OPERATION. THIS REPRESENTS A DECREASE IN THE PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN WHO HAVE HAD THIS OPERATION, AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT THIS PERCENTAGE WILL CONTINUE TO DROP AS TEMPORARY METHODS OF BIRTH CONTROL BECOME MORE AVAILABLE.

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ABLE THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF THE NEW, VIGOROUS, AND HIGHLY ACCESSIBLE FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM OF THE GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO. THIS PROGRAM DOES NOT FUNCTION MERELY AS AN INSTRUMENT TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO BE BORN, BUT IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF AN INTEGRAL PROGRAM OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THIS WELL-COORDINATED PROGRAM HAS DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE ISLAND IN THE LAST 35 YEARS AND THE COMMON-

WEALTH NOW BOASTS OF ONE OF THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF  
LIVING AND ONE OF THE BEST QUALITIES OF LIFE IN THE  
DEVELOPING WORLD. END QUOTE. INGERSOLL

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